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31 October 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Foreign
Assessment Center

FROM :
Special Assistant-NIO Support

SUBJECT : Presidential Intelligence Priorities

1. Attached you will find my synthesization of the questions that were contributed by members of my working group. The sets of questions now number 50, which I think is manageable; I have, however, placed asterisks on the five questions I think least worthy, which would bring us down to an even more manageable 45.

2. These questions, of course, have no standing with my group. Its members consider them my selection and my wording, but with the benefit of their advice. All of them would now like to staff out my questions within their own organizations and, then, to have another series of meetings to argue out their differences. That process, obviously, would be quite time-consuming and would rule out any presentation of the questions to the PRC(I) anytime in November. I am not sure, however, that the process will be any speedier if you take my questions directly to your group.

3. None of the members of my group will be completely happy. (None of them was able to attend all of both meetings.) The JCS representative, and probably the one from OSD, will hold that there are too many questions and that they are too multifaceted. The Treasury representative will be unhappy because I did not include two of the three questions he submitted--on and Indonesian political and economic prospects.

4. The State representative may be particularly unhappy. First, we did not accept Hal Saunders' idea that some sets of questions should be accompanied by statements of assumptions; my group was unanimous--save State--in rejecting this idea on several grounds. Perhaps most serious, the group felt that to let policy makers set the assumptions within which the Intelligence Community pursued its work could prove unduly restrictive; it could prevent us from following promising lines of inquiry and be used to keep us out of certain substantive areas completely. On a practical level, the

negotiation of assumptions might well prove a more arduous task than selecting questions. If we did state assumptions for some questions, moreover, we probably should state them for all. Finally, even when one does state assumptions, one still has to ask questions. One can assume, for example, that Sino-Soviet tensions will remain high, though not lead to a war; one must still ask what the prospects are for change. And assumptions are implicit in most questions.

5. The group also turned down a State proposal to include a whole new section on Changes in the International System. We did so primarily because the issues fit the terms of reference for list A more than they did for list B. When synthesizing the questions, nevertheless, I was able to incorporate many of the issues in this proposed section into the sections we already had. State does have a point that the significance of change in individual states should be considered in a broader context than the politics of that particular state or region and that change in a number of states made add up to a greater significance than the simple sum of its parts. Still, I consider this a list A issue.

6. State may, finally, be unhappy also because we did not take Saunders' questions on the Middle East. I synthesized them because they were far more detailed and specific than the other sets of questions posed.



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Attachment:

National Intelligence Topics of
Basic Long-Term Interest

25X1

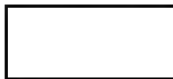
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MEMORANDUM FOR: All NIOs

Please notify me if you have any interest
in the attached by COB 3 November.



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Date

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